

had authority to claim, or how far the Central Government was permitting or even compelling him to use new powers. Part of this novel power has, not unnaturally, been used to take over land-control responsibilities to which the chief has no traditional tribal right, and it has led to the claims, sometimes heard in the Courts and upheld in the District Commissioner's Appeal Court, that chiefs are the sole, traditional and rightful land authorities. It has led to chiefs assuming, or trying to assume, land allocation and supervisory powers which hitherto were the close right only of the village headmen.

Thus some chiefs have declared that they alone, or at least primarily, have allocatory powers over formerly uncultivated tracts which are relatively distant from the villages and which have now become valuable as paddy fields. Others have come to claim rights of interference in village land affairs, even within the long-established village areas. By the undefined threat of their alleged Government support, by taking advantage of new conditions, they have not infrequently "got away with it". They have insisted that their own nominees be allocated vacant holdings; they have gone over the heads of village headmen and made public their opinion as to who, amongst numbers of aspirants, should receive land in villages; they have insisted that headmen should consult them on the details of allocation. The desire for power and further prestige is one impulse behind this development. Sometimes the chiefs, better educated than many of their headmen, are able to understand the modern land situation better and are impatient of their headmen's conservatism and procrastination. Another factor is the potential profit which may accrue as land becomes scarce and thus a valuable commodity, and this became particularly important when the rush developed to take up the formerly vacant lands for paddy cultivation. Gifts in money and kind became common in return for preferential treatment for the donors. These lands are now all allocated and held by someone, but the chiefs have been reluctant to relinquish their new-found authority.

These remarks do not apply to all the chiefs: some have been notably content to use their influence through the traditional system by judicious co-operation with their headmen. Some, too, have been too imperceptive to bother to take action at all. Again, some have been forestalled by strong village headmen who would not allow any diminution of their own status and rights. In some of the formerly vacant lands where no headman could reasonably claim traditional jurisdiction, the operations of the chiefs have probably been beneficial in reducing chaotic land-grabbing and jealous rivalry; once, however, these lands are brought under cultivation there seems to be a good case for their inclusion within the normal Nyakyusa land-control system. The continued existence of a supra-headman authority does not necessarily lead to stability or improved control. Certainly it is not in keeping with the people's values and institutions.

For these changes Government must clearly bear some responsibility and often also the blame for indirectly causing alterations in native land law and custom by some administrative attitude or ruling in a related sphere. There has been a good deal of well-intentioned insistence on determining and strengthening the "Land Authority" in tribal areas in the interests of stability and efficiency. In Rungwe District the facile claims of Nyakyusa chiefs have been only too readily accepted without question. In fact the traditional *umalafyale*, chief, only represented his chiefdom as a unit, and his lack of real power corresponded to the lack of cohesion within the chiefdom. The notion of a supreme "Land Authority" is largely incorrect for the Nyakyusa. In a theoretical sense we may perhaps say that the total land of a chiefdom was and is owned by all of the people in that chiefdom - chief, headmen and villagers; and therefore we may perhaps categorise the chief, the single individual representing the group as a whole, as the "land-owner." To